

**United Kingdom Government response to the European Commission Consultation on the future Trans-European Network (TEN-T) Policy**

**Summary of Views**

The UK welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the European Commission's consultation on the future of the Trans-European Network –Transport (TEN-T) Policy.

We support the move towards a methodological approach to network planning and design that is based on passenger and freight traffic demand. The dual layer approach seems a sensible one. We think that the comprehensive network should be closely linked to the strategic networks of Member States; this should make the delivery of the network a more realistic proposition. The core network should link the key international nodes and gateways directly and support the development of low carbon infrastructure and services. It should deliver a more efficient, reliable network which uses intelligent transport systems to provide a better choice of transport options for businesses and people.

It is important that the network is developed in a sustainable way. Decarbonising the transport sector is one of the biggest challenges in the coming decades. The Programme should encourage technical innovation to accommodate new types of vehicle and

enable infrastructure advances relating to the use of energy in transport.

We must recognise that both domestic and EU budgets will be under pressure for the foreseeable future. With that in mind the programme should focus resources effectively to bring value for money, supporting more efficient use of the existing infrastructure and requiring a clear evidence base to justify the inclusion of any new routes. We would welcome greater co-ordination between TEN-T, Cohesion and other Structural Funds along with a greater role for the European Investment Bank. A streamlined funding programme should reduce administrative costs and burdens on applicants and encourage greater involvement of private sector funding.

We look forward to working with the European Commission and Member States in developing this important policy which can support growth and sustainability.

## **The methodology for TEN-T planning**

### **1. *Are the principles and criteria for designing the core network, as set out above, adequate and practicable? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what else could be taken into account?***

The principles and criteria seem sound and are similar to the criteria used to define the strategic transport corridors. More clarity is needed on the definitions of major hubs and the criteria for establishing which ports and airports would be considered intercontinental hubs within the “core” network. We recommend that a proportionate view is taken which recognises the different regional needs and allows for flexibility to meet future transport demands whilst balancing the need to keep the core network tightly focussed. In determining the “relevant technical parameters” the Commission should look at functional and capacity needs rather than engineering standards for the infrastructure.

The Commission should consider defining European Added Value in the context of the programme.

### **2. *To what extent do the supplementary infrastructure measures contribute to the objectives of a future-oriented transport system, and are there ways to strengthen their contribution?***

The programme should encourage improving the efficiency of existing technologies across all modes of transport and help to develop a broad range of cost effective low carbon technologies.

The UK supports in principle the continuation of measures to promote inland waterways, rail and short sea shipping within the TEN-T network where this makes good sense as an alternative to road, in order to reduce the environmental impact of freight transport overall. Progress on the Motorways of the Seas funding programme under the TEN-T has been slow although it does appear to be improving now. If such targeted funding is to continue, in order to better exploit the potential of rail and water freight networks within the TEN-T, we would prefer to see a strategic assessment to identify EU locations, in each Member State, where infrastructure upgrade of ports, transport hubs and rail, inland waterway and shipping facilities etc could provide maximum benefits in relation to costs. Providing the results were

agreed with Member States, the outcome of the review could be used by the Commission to prioritise the allocation of funds to rail and water freight projects over the Financial Perspective, in order to better integrate these modes into the TEN-T and maximise the potential benefits of limited funds.

Safe and secure parking areas for road haulage and passenger vehicles and passenger should be an integral part of the road network; this can improve safety and reduce congestion.

We think that developing intelligent transport systems (ITS) that use collaborative decision making to increase the use of multi-modal transport systems will help us capitalise on the opportunities offered by technological advance. Providing improved travel and traffic information will help reduce congestion and give business and the travelling public the ability to make better transport choices. While standardisation of ITS has the potential to improve interoperability, this should not be used to prevent local innovations that deliver network benefits. The Commission should ensure that where ITS standards are appropriate on the TEN-T they should reflect those developed under the ITS directive and that there is no competing or overlapping activity between these programmes.

### **What specific role could TEN-T planning in general play in boosting the transport sector's contribution to the "Europe 2020" strategic objectives?**

It is important that the focus of the policy should be to support competitiveness, enabling growth and job creation, balanced with the need to make transport more sustainable.

Decarbonising the transport sector is one of the biggest challenges in the coming decade. The Programme should encourage technical innovation to accommodate new types of vehicle and enable infrastructure advances relating to the use of energy in transport. Common standards across Europe will be an important part of this, but with these new technologies at such an early stage of development the Commission should not rush to impose standards or we risk stifling innovation. The focus at the European level should be agreeing the minimum number of base standards necessary to ensure interoperability.

Investing in Intelligent Transport Systems such as traffic management and enforcement and safety systems can deliver environmental gains and optimise network usage. Projects should demonstrate their fit with the 2020 strategic objectives to receive funding.

## **TEN-T implementation**

### ***3. In which way can the different sources of EU expenditure be better coordinated and/or combined in order to accelerate the delivery of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?***

Coordinated funding is important; but care should be taken that amalgamation of different funding streams with different strategic objectives doesn't reduce the value of EU funding. There may be scope for better co-ordination between the Cohesion Fund and TEN-T projects, especially as both budgets are likely to be under pressure in the next programming period.

Funding alone cannot accelerate projects; if the network is closely aligned to national strategic priorities it is more likely to be completed. Objective analysis of bottlenecks and problems on the network should enable a better prioritisation of funding to deliver better results. The UK agrees that oversight and coordination may be needed in complicated cross-border projects but Member States should retain competence in developing and delivering transport projects on their national networks; the programme should work as a partnership to mobilise different sources of funding effectively to deliver projects that have demonstrable value for the network.

### **How can an EU funding strategy coordinate and/or combine the different sources of EU and national funding and public and private financing?**

The proposed co-ordination between the European funding framework and the European Investment Bank (EIB) transport projects portfolio is welcomed as a means leveraging EU project support and EIB know-how to secure synergies between the two institutions. However, it is important to recognise that financial sector volatility has led to intense competition for EIB funds and that this will limit the Bank's ability to mobilise private sources of PPP funds towards transport sector projects.

Similarly, the proposed development of the Commission's funding practice into a form that supports EU PPP practice is welcomed. However, EU rules only envisage supporting projects over a seven year period. This can be helpful in relation to the early stages of projects (for example, with the design phase or feasibility studies), but it does not address longer term PPP delivery issues. The most common form of UK PPP delivery is the Private Finance Initiative (PFI); such projects typically require longer term commitments (25-30 years) from Government. The Commission should consider ways of supporting such long term projects that are not limited to the period of the Financial Perspective.

### **Would the setting up of a European funding framework adequately address the implementation gap in the completion of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?**

The UK government considers that this has merit. Properly designed it could provide transparency in managing the funding programme and a more efficient, cost effective delivery. However competence on deciding and promoting projects and investment on the network should remain with individual Member States. The implementation gap is not necessarily a funding issue. Having a clearer idea of what constitutes European added value, an objective assessment of which parts of the network are most in need of extra capacity and ensuring potential projects have a sound cost benefit analysis (which includes an assessment of the network benefits) will ensure that funding is given to projects which will improve the way the network functions.

### **The legal and institutional framework of the TEN-T policy review.**

#### **In which way can the TEN-T policy benefit from the new legal instruments and provisions as set out above?**

In deciding the new legislative framework for the Programme it is important to consider the better regulation agenda. New legal instruments should actually deliver programme benefits and not just simplify the existing legislative framework.

Genuine efficiencies should be sought from the review with an emphasis on removing bureaucracy and saving money in

managing the programme. It should be recognised that guidelines can be a more flexible way of managing a programme. Simplification is not just about removing or reducing regulation; it should focus on doing things in the most practical and cost effective way.

A clearer definition of the nature and extent of delegated powers in the commitology arrangements is needed. Competence over the delivery of transport infrastructure should remain with Member States.